

James



**“BUT BE DOERS OF THE WORD, AND NOT
HEARERS ONLY, DECEIVING YOURSELVES.”**

Faith Without Works Is Dead



- **vs. 14** – *“What does it profit...”*
 - Rhetorical question: implies a vain and worthless situation
 - As in Matt 16:26
 - *Remember*: still discussing hearing but not doing (1:22)
- *“...if someone says he has faith but he does not have works?”*
 - *The claim*: “I am a person of faith”
 - *The evidence*: **none** – no good works (Eph 2:10; Titus 3:8), i.e. good deeds, following the pattern of Christ (Acts 10:38)
 - *The reality*: that’s **not** faith (at least not *acceptable* faith)
 - *“Can faith save him?”* – i.e. belief alone does not save
 - **True** faith saves (Rom 1:16-17,3:21-26; Eph 2; etc.)

Faith Without Works Is Dead



- **vs. 15-16** – “*If a brother or sister...*”
 - *Illustration*: claiming to have faith without good works is just as good as...
 - *Telling a hungry person to be full without feeding him*
 - *Telling a naked person to be warm without clothing him*
 - Loving and caring for brethren is the fundamental truth this illustration is built upon (cf. Gal 6:10; I Jn 3:17; etc.)
- **vs. 17** – “*Thus also, faith by itself...*”
 - *Conclusion*: in the exact same ineffective, worthless way, faith without good works is *dead* (i.e. empty, useless)
 - In judgment, our intellectual belief in the gospel will not save us: *what will our works say? Read Matt 25:14-46.*

Faith Without Works Is Dead



- **Some conclusions that necessarily follow:**
 - “*says*” and “*does not have*” (vs. 14) are continual verbs in the Greek: i.e. *keep on claiming but continually don’t act*
 - True faith – i.e. acceptable to God – is always active (Rom 1:8; Gal 5:6; I Thes 1:3; etc.)
 - Faith is demonstrated through good works, like a good tree is known by its fruit (Lk 6:44-45; Jam 3:13)
 - Christians can claim to have faith, believing our claim to be true, but still be lost because we don’t live like Christ!
 - James (unlike Paul, e.g. in Rom 4) is speaking to the saved Christian: you *cannot* remain in salvation without doing good like Christ did (Phil 2:12-16)

Faith Without Works Is Dead



- **Two contrary arguments to vs. 14-17:**
- Christians can have one or the other: faith *or* works...
 - “*I have faith*” is a claim that cannot be proven without action – faith is demonstrated and proved only by action!
- I have my *belief* – surely that is enough to prove my faith...
 - This whole section anticipates a defense: those condemned by James’ teaching (1:21-2:13) trying to defend themselves
 - Mental assent to the existence of God does not demonstrate or prove faith – *even the demons believe and fear!*
- Think of **every** example of faith you can from the entire Bible: *How do you know* they were people of faith? *Why* were they pleasing to God? (See Hebrews 11...)

Faith Without Works Is Dead



- **Two examples that disprove those arguments:**
 - Abraham – *the power of continually obedient faith*
 - “*father*,” see Gal 3:29, 6:16; I Pet 3:6
 - “*justified*” means to be judicially proven righteous – this was God’s action toward Abraham (Gen 22)
 - What if Abraham had not obeyed? Would he have been justified by God?
 - vs. 22 – “working together with” is the Greek *sunergeo* and means “to cooperate” (cf. Mark 16:20; Rom 8:28)
 - Faith accomplishes nothing if not accompanied by action!
 - Look at Heb 11 – could belief alone accomplish any of the things that Abraham accomplished?

Faith Without Works Is Dead



- **Two examples that disprove those arguments:**
 - Abraham
 - vs. 23 – God’s judgment in Gen 15:6 was proven true (i.e. fulfilled, in His perfect foreknowledge) by Gen 22
 - Abraham’s faith led him to *continually* obey God, even when difficult – *he gained salvation by active faith*

Faith Without Works Is Dead



- **Two examples that disprove those arguments:**
 - Rahab – *the power of a life changed by faith*
 - Story told in Joshua 2 – she heard of God’s power displayed in Egypt and believed in Him
 - Received mercy when Jericho was destroyed: married Salmon of Judah, and they bore Boaz (cf. Ruth; Matt 1)
 - What if Rahab had believed in God but given up the spies to the soldiers of Jericho?
 - Instead, her belief cooperated with works and:
 - Her family was spared
 - She is listed forever as an example of faith (cf. Heb 11:31)
 - The Messiah was born from her lineage